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ABSTRACT

Successful leaders interact with group members and draw on their skills and knowledge. This paper examines some principles of interaction and socialization that support a view of effective leadership in schools--that of leadership as social validation. Inherent in the principal's job description is the tension between organizational socialization and leadership succession, which represents a classic tension between integration and creativity. The first part addresses the social pressure attendant to leadership change experiences and the opportunity that periods of change present to examine leadership relationships as they develop. The second part explores some of the implications of organizational socialization research for new school leaders and the interdependence of the school and principal. The third section confronts the possible outcomes of principal integration versus creativity and innovation and applies this discussion to the organizational socialization experience. The concluding section discusses the implications of an interactive view of leadership for principals seeking to exert influence in schools. The value of a social validation, interactive view of leadership points to sources of creativity outside the principal, highlights the responsibility of the principal's superiors for leadership outcomes, and promotes respect between parents and teachers. (LMI)

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# LEADERSHIP AS SOCIAL VALIDATION

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## LEADERSHIP AS SOCIAL VALIDATION

Research on leaders (particularly those in professional groups working with highly educated and independent adults) affirms that successful leaders draw on the knowledge and skill of all group members and function interactively. Influence is reciprocal (Scott, 1987; Smith & Peterson, 1988). This paper examines some principles of interaction and socialization that support a view of effective leadership in schools -- leadership as social validation. While less heroic than some approaches to leadership, it accurately reflects experiences of principals in schools and the results of empirical inquiry.

The principles on which I draw for this discussion come from organizational socialization and leadership succession research. The argument for leadership as social validation is supported by the requirement that principals balance two sometimes conflicting needs. The need to fit into the cohesive work group of the school (in order for it to be accepted and effective -- organizational socialization), and they need to remain different and distinct so as to contribute creatively to the growth and development of the group (leadership succession). These conflicting requirements represent a classic tension between integration and creativity in socialization research (Wentworth, 1980).

To lay out the argument for this perspective on school leadership as interaction, I draw on leadership succession destabilization events and the restabilization influence of socialization. First, I address the social pressures attendant to leadership change experiences and the opportunity periods of change represent to examine leadership relationships as they develop. Second, I explore some of implications of organizational socialization research for new school leaders undergoing this experience and the interdependence of school and principal. Third, I confront the possible outcomes of principal integration versus creativity and innovation and apply this discussion to the organizational socialization experience. I end with a brief discussion of the implications of an interactive view of leadership for principals seeking to exert influence in schools.

### Leadership Change

The appointment of a principal creates a period of "apprehension and fear of the unknown with high expectations being held" by principals, teachers, and district superiors alike (Weindling & Earley, 1987, p. 67). In addition to the traditional concern over the appointment of principals to the profession (which is happening at a high rate -- see Baltzell & Dentler, 1983), researchers find that school leaders are often transferred from one assignment to another. In Great Britain, turnover rates stand at seven percent per year (Weindling & Earley, 1987). Since the Education Reform Act [1988] passed in that country, bringing with it sweeping changes in the role of the head, many say they want to retire (possible at age 55) or leave

the profession. Weindling speculates that these turnover rates may consequently increase substantially (Weindling, 1991).

Relationships between the school leader, other adults, and the children and youth who work in a school form over the early weeks and months of a leadership assignment. The processes that shape these interactions develop over time into dependable and expected patterns (Cosgrove, 1986). People use these patterns to judge the legitimacy of current events and future actions. Consequently, the interaction of a principal or head with people in the school sets the stage for the future influence she might have on their beliefs and actions.

When the appointment occurs, the gap between the formal study of school leadership and the vivid and demanding experience of taking charge in a school looms large. Immediate demands to schedule classes, plan (and pay for) extra-curricular activities, complete budget and statistical reports, and buffer the district office from parents' complaints can overwhelm early resolutions to make a difference for kids, to contribute to the quality of teaching and learning in schools, to build connections in the instructional system. These demands on principals often push them to abandon the formal skills and knowledge acquired as teachers and in preservice university-based school leadership education in favor of short-term adjustive behaviors that delay or suppress conflict. The press to conform to existing patterns of practice is intense. Under these pressures, principals taking on their first professional assignment must find ways to connect and integrate their professional knowledge and experience. They must carefully assess their own and the school's salutary core values and beliefs and apply them to the dynamics and unique challenges they face (Porter, Lawler, & Hackman, 1975).

These decisions are not easily made. A principal (new to administration or new to a particular school) will find inchoate relationships and interaction patterns between herself, her superiors, and the school social system at the time of her appointment. These relationships form and become stronger as a result of her interactions with people -- superiors, teachers, parents, students -- and she will be able to influence their shape if she chooses. Relationships and judgments begin to form during the uncertainty preceding a change in principals, throughout selection, and into the taking-charge time when the principal is deeply embroiled in a complex social process and when time to reflect on her experience may be difficult to find (Hart, 1992; Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985). As a principal seeks to become a functioning leader and understand her relationships with others in the group, she ultimately is concerned with her experience rendered meaningful through insight (McNeil, 1969).

The mix of principal and school is unique each time a principal is appointed. This uniqueness poses dilemmas for a principal. If one examines the change in leadership only from the perspective of the principal, one misses the history of events and can not account for the

conduct of people. But if one focuses too intently on outcomes and ignores the dynamic mix of people, processes, and contexts that shape events, one loses track of the qualities and power of the individual principal. The system loses the benefit of uniqueness and creativity.

Any focus on the effects of the lone heroic leader, the individual free agent, isolated from the context in which action occurs is naive at best. Even those who ascribe to contingency theories of leadership, emphasizing the favorableness of the environment for effective leadership, study the leader's actions. The social relationships between formal leaders and their hierarchical subordinates and superordinates play an important part in their influence on the school. Leadership scholars emphasize these multi-directional leadership effects:

> The findings of ... researchers ... provide firm evidence for the view that influence-processes between superiors and subordinates are two-way rather than one-way. It might still prove to be the case that leaders influence their subordinates more than subordinates influence their leaders. But the studies make clear the manner in which subordinate actions can cause leaders to perceive subordinates in certain ways and consequently to employ certain behaviors towards them rather than others (Smith & Peterson, 1988, p. 40)

Cultural and symbolic leadership provide one popular model of leadership. Some interpretations of this model portray groups as especially dependent on leaders' almost mystical effects on the groups they lead. Research in schools challenges the universality of this assumption. Describing the "cultural politics of executive succession" by superintendents, Firestone (1989) found that current enthusiasm for dramatic leadership achieved by manipulating organizational culture was not supported by his case studies of superintendent succession. He questioned the assumption that the superintendent is a free actor when choosing the direction of cultural change in school districts. Roberts (1989a, 1989b) affirmed the ambiguities of cultural leadership as it is currently defined and echoed Firestone's conclusions in a series of case studies of high school principals.

**Organizational Socialization: Interdependence**

In the discussion that follows, I examine of the integration and socialization of the principal into a specific social setting -- a unique, functioning, dynamic, frustrating, fulfilling, wonderful school. Instead of concentrating on the principal, the leader, to the exclusion of the school, I examine features of the interaction process during the taking-charge processes that yield identifiable outcomes. Principals learn social roles just as all people learn how they should behave in a given setting with a given audience (Goffman, 1957). They may be officially powerful, but principals, too, are socialized; they learn the social role that will buy them access to legitimacy and validation in a given setting (Merton, Reader, & Kendall, 1957).

This learning process involves adjustments and adaptations to the expectations of the school on the part of principals. These adjustments make cooperative effort possible and represent an orientation toward common needs and goals. Through the adjustment process, people come to internalize the values, norms, and beliefs of others in the same school and to see things as others see them. As a principal adopts the generally accepted explanations for events, he is "socialized" but not (necessarily) enslaved.

When principals enter a district and/or school as new members of the social group, they experience a form of adult socialization -- organizational socialization. Organizational socialization differs from professional socialization (Schein, 1986). It teaches a person the knowledge, values, and behaviors required of them in a particular role within a particular organization. These values and norms may be very different than those the person learned as part of his professional socialization.

To the chagrin of college professors, organizational socialization -- immediate, salient, and persuasive -- often overpowers the effects of carefully structured professional socialization (Bucher & Stelling, 1977; Duke, 1987). Guy (1985) asserted that the need to fit in to the immediate work environment makes organizational socialization more salient and immediate than the experiences that precede it, no matter how carefully organized. The organization controls a person's evaluation and reward structures and provides social and personal reinforcement for compliance with immediate social norms and expectations. Organizational norms consequently tend to displace those learned during professional socialization. Principals and the others who work in schools consequently are interdependent. The principal has formal leadership power but depends on those in the school for the power of the group to act.

Van Maanen and Schein (1979, p. 211) provided a vivid description of what happens when a person enters an established organization as a new member:

> [Experienced members] must ... find ways to insure that the newcomer does not disrupt the ongoing activity on the scene, embarrass or cast disparaging light on others, or question too many of the established cultural solutions worked out previously.... The manner in which this teaching/learning occurs is ... the organizational socialization process [emphasis in the original].

As the teachers in Cosgrove's (1985) study of principal succession repeatedly pointed out, principals come and principals go, and teachers ofter. find very effective ways to buffer themselves from the impact of principals' "leadership" no matter how visionary it may be.

Peter Blau (1967, p. 275-276) also described this process:

> [T]he process of socialization results in many of the legitimating values of organized community life being passed on to future generations, and these are the institutionalized values that

> sustain and invigorate the external forms of institutions, which without them would be dead skeletons.

Organizational socialization binds the members of work organizations into communities with far deeper interdependence and ties than those forged through temporary connections with educational institutions or with organizations a principal has now left.

By now, one may wonder whether I believe a principal can have any real impact on a school and the teaching and learning that take place there. Even though the effects of groups on individuals extend to everyone, including principals, this does not mean that principals lack influence. By examining the socialization of leaders, I acknowledge that leaders are part of a social context that wields a combined source of power over their beliefs and actions greater than the power of either previous professional socialization or their own formal authority:

> If the ... qualities of the individual are said to be derived from experience in society, there is no logical sense in beginning serious scientific inquiry into the effect (the role-related, social self), while ignoring the cause (society, and ipso facto, socialization) .... The nature of the "society" presented in socialization must be described (Wentworth, 1980, p. 8).

At the same time, the group holds great power in concert that astute and skillful school leaders can bring to bear on the tasks and problems that face educators in schools. In a way, this power of the school amplifies any power and influence a principal might hope to exercise on her own.

Organizational socialization then, reveals the multi-directional effects of leaders and organizations, recognizing that a newly assigned principal is a newcomer who must be integrated into the school social group, validated by social processes, and granted legitimacy by teachers, students, parents, patrons, and superiors before she can have a significant impact on actions taken by others. Authority granted by the social group in the school differs from other forms of influence. Blau (1967, p. 200) distinguishes this socially validated authority as <u>leadership</u>:

> It may be suggested that the distinctive feature of authority is that social norms accepted and enforced by the collectivity of subordinates constrain its individual members to comply with directives of a superior. Compliance is voluntary for the collectivity, but social constraints make it compelling for the individual. In contrast to other forms of influence and power, the pressure to follow suggestions and orders does not come from the superior who gives them but from the collectivity of subordinates. These normative constraints may be institutionalized and pervade the entire society, or they may emerge in a group in social interaction. The latter emergent norms define leadership....

In contrast to the authority and power granted by the collective, the authority rooted in formal position is limited in scope to the performance of duties that meet a minimum standard. Only actions required by policy and

direct demands can be controlled by principals relying on formal authority. The exercise of this kind of authority unnecessarily sets a principal up for insubordination responses from teachers and others. Effective management, Blau asserted, is impossible on the basis of formal authority alone.

School effects on principals seeking to influence a school in turn deserve increased attention for a number of reasons. First, interaction on the job may be the most important factor in helping newcomers become effective members of work organizations (Louis, Posner, & Powell, 1983). Second, leaders learn roles, whether or not the leader and his superiors influence that process deliberately. If one cares about the outcome, one might as well learn as much as possible about this process and affect its outcomes if possible.

Providing additional support for a view of school leadership that acknowledges the power that socialization exerts in creating effective leaders in schools, Greenfield (1985b) asserted that the role-learning outcomes of socialization serve as primary criteria for later success. Furthermore, he found that principals must learn respected attitudes, values, and beliefs in the school context in order to gain the acceptance of others in similar and superordinate leadership roles and of people in the school. Greenfield argued that the social structure of the school organization is a powerful mediating force affecting work activities and outcomes. Moral socialization, as well as technical socialization, exerts critical force over the eventual professional identity of principals.

Finally, socialization's influences on leaders are well documented over time and context (White, 1977). Managers' attitudes, self-concept, and professional identity resulting from socialization experiences have long been a focus of study (Berlew & Hall, 1966-67). A principal who ignores these influences over his professional life risks leaving much of his development to chance.

The traditional leadership literature relies on methods and assumptions that address the outcomes of principals' interaction with schools in general and the traits of leaders and schools that predict these outcomes. When the power of context is considered, this approach seems to reflect an exaggerated concern with organizational control, image management, and status quo pattern maintenance (Nicholson, 1984). In contrast, a perspective relying on the interaction of leaders with powerful groups advances understanding and practice in three ways. First, it enhances the likelihood that educational leaders will identify circumstances when a decision to reassign or transfer principals might be advantageous. Second, it allows educators to understand and affect the social dynamics of changes in the principalship across time. Finally, it promotes an understanding of the effects of interaction between school groups and individuals on principals and school outcomes. All three of these advances in practice deserve elaboration.

In schools, studies of principals' appointments and leadership provide a look at dynamics that may trigger or suppress major shifts in ideology and practice (Blumberg & Greenfield, 1986; Ogawa, 1991; Starbuck, Hedboerg & Greve, 1977). Blumberg and Greenfield (1986) presented rich case studies of principals who functioned differently, yet effectively, within schools relying on very different major qualities -- action oriented, resourceful, goal oriented, personally secure, tolerant of ambiguity, limits' tester, power sensitive, analytical, and taking charge. Dwyer et al. (1983) similarly focused on Five Principals in Action, illustrating how very differently "effective" principals function in different schools. Case studies go far in advancing understanding of the context-rooted and interactive nature of the principalship.

Affirming the long tradition of this view and its importance in understanding organizational leadership, the earliest studies of administrator succession relied on case studies of complex interactions within organizations (Gouldner, 1954; Guest, 1962). Cases revealing the dynamics of leader succession processes within organizations, including schools, continue to offer intriguing insights (Fauske & Ogawa, 1988; Gephart, 1978; Ogawa, 1992; Oskarsson & Klein, 1982; Salaman, 1977).

I do not mean by this affirmation of the interactive nature of school leadership that a principal's main task is to fit in, adapt, and secure acceptance in the school. Were this the case, the teachers' protectionist views expressed in Cosgrove's (1985) research would be reinforced. A principal may adapt and prosper personally without contributing to school growth and development, without improving the connectedness of the instructional system in the school and the achievement of desired goals (Bredeson, 1993). Schools need their principals to become socially integrated in order to achieve the group's affirmation of their right to act in behalf of the school (what Yukl (1990) calls idiosyncrasy credits), but they also need creativity and new ideas in order to make and facilitate critical connections in the instructional system (Dwyer, et al., 1985). These two apparently conflicting needs make the effects of interaction between a principal and a school a critical factor shaping future events and outcomes. These events are most intense and vibrant during the early weeks and months after a principal is appointed, what scholars call the succession period.

The need to fit in and the need to affect change seem contradictory, yet this challenge is universal to human interactions (Wentworth, 1980). These needs do work at cross purposes if principals fail to find a productive balance between them in each unique situation. One must not assume that all social learning is positive. The acceptance on the part of a principal of established solutions that have not been productive or are blatantly unproductive is a negative outcome of interaction. Although thorough

learning and acceptance of the existing culture through socialization may:

> always be immediately adjustive for an individual in that such learning will reduce the tension associated with entering an unfamiliar situation, such learning, in the long run, may not always be adaptive, since certain cultural forms may persist long after they have ceased to be of individual value (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, pp. 212-213).

Taking charge is a powerful experience for which few principals are adequately prepared (Weindling & Earley, 1987). Pfeffer and others contended that the socialization of managers assures a uniformity that suppresses creativity and the diverse options that might be necessary to address the complex dilemmas and needs of schools--in effect, that managers of all kinds are "over socialized." Socialization also has been named as an important factor in the seeming intransigence of educational administration to the changes attempted in preservice graduate school education programs (Hart, Sorensen & Naylor, 1993). This intransigence is a real but not insurmountable challenge. "It is the social context of leadership actions which gives them their meaning and consequently their effect" (Smith & Peterson, 1988, p. 61). As Schein (1985, p. 197) argued, in a mature group "leadership comes to be seen as a shared set of activities rather than a single person's trait, and a sense of ownership of group outcomes arises."

Others assert the social nature of principals' role in schools more radically: leadership is an attribute not of individuals but of social systems (Dachler, 1984; Ogawa & Bossert, 1991). The knowledge that social groups possess a singular power related to leadership but distinct from individual influence can expand understanding and, hopefully, practice educational leadership.

### Integration versus Creativity and Innovation

#### The Mix of People, Leaders, and Events: Sha; ing and Predicting the Outcomes of Interaction

In addition to those in totally new positions, people in transition from one role to another within an organization experience organizational socialization (Van Maanen, 1978). Unlike primary socialization such as babies and young children experience, a principal enters her organizational socialization experience as a complex adult member of many different groups possessing strong beliefs and values. Both deliberately and unconsciously, organizations apply a number of tactics to integrate new members, and principals experience these tactics more or less aware of their potential effects on outcomes. The decision to leave the socialization of newcomers to chance, dependent on the mix of people, issues, power, and events that happen to coincide is, of itself, a tactic. Writers describe a number of categories of socialization tactics likely to affect new members.

This list of tactics is by no means exhaustive, and districts may change their tactics continually, depending on developing circumstances.

Interest in socialization includes the interaction of all these tactics and their effect on the new member and the group. Scholars also examine the substantive changes in new members that occur (Wentworth, 1980). What core social beliefs and values might have to be adopted before new members can function as an accepted part of the group? How completely must these core values or behaviors be adopted? How dependent or independent is the new member:

> The novice can be relatively powerless in an ultimate way, yet actively influence the face-to-face process of socialization. The novice then may also inject control and power into the socialization relationship. This is to say, the members' culture is not presented in a vacuum. It is presented <u>to</u> someone so that its precise quality is historically and concurrently modified in the interaction between member and novice. The content of socializing activity is thus modified by the very structure of the interaction situation. Socialization is then related to the context of its presentation (Wentworth, 1980, p. 69).

When the new member also is the functional leader of the group, this influence clearly is enhanced. As a leader enters the group, "socialization not only presents a world, it constructs one" (Wentworth, 1980, p. 134).

Sociality refers to the relatedness, connection, and modeling available through the socialization process. Are there many others like you in the principal's role on which you can model your behavior? Perhaps your high school football coach whom you admire very much is the principal of another school in your district. Are you the first African-American, Native-American, woman, Asian-American to serve as a school leader in your area? Are you the first blind school principal anyone in your district ever worked with?

When principals follow in someone's footsteps and strong role models exist for them, they experience serial socialization. By contrast, disjunctive socialization leaves a newcomer without significant role models. Principals can experience disjunctive socialization if they differ significantly in personal characteristics from those who commonly are principals. Women and ethnic minority members, for example, report significant stress in their leadership roles. They often feel that they must negotiate their way through more ambiguity with less support that their more conventional peers because few people like them have preceded them in the role (Ortiz & Marshall, 1988; Valverde, 1980).

While it may sound lonely and difficult, disjunctive socialization also has its advantages. It <u>may</u> make it possible for the principal to build a whole new role. An absence of role models leaves principals more free to innovate <u>and</u> more ambiguous about what is expected of them in the new role. Consequently, disjunction is a two-edged sword. A lack of role models also has its benefits. Researchers find strong evidence that, when innovation is

needed, "the socialization process should minimize the possibility of allowing incumbents to form relationships with their likely successors" (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 250). Just as mentors can suppress innovation, role models can limit thinking and constrain options. While principals without role models need social support, they may be forced to tap their individual creativity more deeply and spark new ideas in others with whom they work.

By contrast, an organizational socialization experience may exert pressure to either strengthen or abandon his professional self-image as an educator. Duke (1987) acknowledged the power of shedding old images when he recommended that teachers be encouraged to demand instructional leadership from principals and instructional-oriented teachers be recruited into administration. His first recommendation would require "traditional" candidates to divest themselves of beliefs about principals as evaluators, schedulers, organizers, risk managers, and budget directors. His second recommendation would require that educational leaders recruit principals who possess strong instructional skills and values. A powerful new corps of principals exerting these values might force divestiture of less instructionally oriented images among established principals! When a new work assignment reinforces the professional identity of a person, the existing sense of self at work is invested -- affirmed and supported. When the work assignment challenges a person's professional identity and causes a substantial adjustment in the self-concept, divestiture occurs (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

A principal should not minimize the impact of socialization during taking-charge experiences. Citing Fromm (1942), Nicholson and West (1988, p. 1) put it starkly.

> ...[O]ne might even argue...that one of the main functions of culture is to cushion and protect us from our fundamental insecurities about change.... The most anxiety-inducing questions about the meaning of our existence, the uncertainty of the future, and he nature of identity, are solved for us, partially, at least, by the mechanisms of cultural transmission -- the socialization of values, beliefs and behaviors and the institutionalization of social relationships.

## Stages of Socialization

Earlier I referred to the Danforth Foundation's sponsorship of a series of studies on new principals. Some of the most useful findings to emerge from these studies were reported by Parkay and his colleagues (1992) and illuminated stages through which principals pass as they mature as school leaders. Regardless of the profession, newcomers appear to move through a series of stages as they experience socialization in a new setting. Stage frameworks rely on time passage or the occurrence of crucial events (Wanous, 1980). As you think about the stages of your own first assignment

as a principal, keep in mind how the stages relate to each other and how one moves from one stage to another.

Linear models (like the one proposed by Parkay, et al., 1992) see new school leaders moving through stages along a continuum until they reach equilibrium, integration, and influence in the school. Iterative and cyclical views of stages see the process continuing perpetually, as principals anticipate their next school assignment (as do Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985). Parkay and his colleagues (1992) identified five stages in the taking-charge experiences of principals that they classified as survival, control, stability, educational leadership, and professional actualization, but three stages are more common choice. These stages differentiate periods of learning and uncertainty, gradual adjustment and influence, and stabilization and maturity. In the discussion that follows, I include Parkay, et al.'s five stages within these three general categories.

**Anticipation and Confrontation**

Quoting Van Maanen (1977a, p. 15), Parkay et al. (1992) call this first stage in a principal's taking-charge experience a "'breaking-in' phenomenon" that "represents a prototypical crisis period...." New principals often describe this time in their experience as "traumatic chaos." Parkay et al. labeled it "survival." During this time, principals sometimes have difficulty using communication to influence the interpretations of others. Roberts, studying the same principals as Parkay et al., found during these early times that:

> Stories circulating among faculty members were not principal-initiated, positive, culture-building tales but rather complaints in which the new principal was often the target. Making changes without sufficient communication, being critical of all instead of a guilty few, being negative about faculty in an article, constantly point out errors, and even being inappropriately silent.... Most who faced these difficulties reacted defensively.... In only a couple of cases were new principals able to handle such complaints from faculty in a sensitive, constructive manner which resulted in a positive outcome. (1989a, pp. 16-17)

Further, principals in this stage experience some of their most serious challenges from strong, resistant, and experienced teachers whose place and power in the school culture is firmly established. As one principal put it,

> Little in my background or training adequately prepared me for the dilemmas that I faced in my first year as principal.... Decisions were usually easy -- all I needed to do was fall back on school district policy, contract law, sound accounting practices, state financial regulations, and the liberal application of rational and logical thought processes.... I felt totally confident that I had been well-prepared by training and temperament to confront any problem I might encounter and astound everyone with the Solomon-like wisdom I was to exhibit. (Aldrich, 1984)

This first stage for new principals inspires mixed emotions as excitement and anticipation are combined with confrontation with a culture. I do not mean by the use of the term confrontation that principals should plan to be confrontational, nor that those in the school will necessarily be so. I do mean that strong new members with formal power over established members of a group pose a threat, however benign, to existing relationships within a school, and savvy new principals should plan for a cautious (if not a deliberately manipulative) response from teachers, students, and others. During this first stage, the beginning principals study researchers found the least successful principals focused their efforts on establishing tight control over the various components in their schools and provided little leadership linked to values and integration into the culture (Roberts, 1989).

While I differentiate professional socialization (pre-entry) from this discussion of organizational socialization stages, I should acknowledge that some scholars find the process more seamless. This perspective includes anticipatory socialization in the complete process of "getting in" to a school social group, from preparation through selection and early entry. Success during this stage depends on the extent to which the expectations of the new principal and the district/school are realistic, and the degree to which the newcomer is well-matched with her role (Watts, Short, & Well, 1987). During this stage the principal is initiated to the job and into a group of colleagues and interpersonal relationships. Through interaction processes, the group and the principal come to see how she fits into the school, uses time, and works toward common goals (Feldman, 1976). As one principal put it, she will face a situation of "new principal/old community" (Artis, 1984, p. 107) when one "department head...refused to talk with me and...saw my efforts as a direct intrusion into his prerogatives."

During this first stage, the principal must confront and accept the reality of the new social setting (Wanous, 1980). Expectations are confirmed or disconfirmed, conflicts between personal values and needs and the climate of the school are confronted, and the aspects of self that the setting will reinforce or suppress are discovered.

The encounter and confrontation stage requires much learning of a principal. This learning should be cognitive and affective. Cognitive learning during entry into the school, sometimes is called sense making (Louis, 1980b), and surprise functions as the most powerful feature (Parkay et al., 1992). The demands of "surprise and sense making" on a principal during encounter seem dependent on three main factors: (1) the amount of change -- differences in status, role requirements, and work environment between the new and old positions; (2) contrast -- the carry-over of people from old to new settings; and (3) surprise -- unmet positive and negative expectations. Reality usually differs markedly from expectations (Richards, 1984). Stress-coping during encounter also focuses on feelings (Hopson & Adams, 1976). Some have compared the experience of changing into a major new role (principal) to the grieving process, but most, acknowledging that job change is stressful, assert it is far less traumatic. During

encounter, anxiety around whether their contributions will be valued and people will like their work confronts new principals (Nicholson & West, 1988). Women feel significantly higher levels of presuccession or pretransition anxiety about performance and the value of their contributions than do men. But all in all, this first stage can be one of "excitement, optimism, and discovery" (Nicholson & West, 1988, p. 98). Major sources of discovery are work context (atmosphere, training or learning opportunities, and communications and decision making), job content (the nature of the work, the people, and the supervision), and personal responses or effects (performance, reactions and feelings, impacts on lifestyle). Surprises occur in transitions to new organizations and in transitions within organizations. Negative surprises tend to outweigh positive, particularly those related to people and the environment.

**Accommodation and Integration**

During the conclusion of the first stage, as principals move on toward more integrated leadership, Parkay et al. identify a focus on control, on "setting priorities and seeking ways to manage the overwhelming flow of new demands" (1992, p. 16). They found principals afraid of losing control and being labeled as ineffective. As a defense, many principal rely on their formal sources of power.

This accommodation stage involves a graduate accomplishment of the task of fitting in. The principal must reach accommodation with his new work role, the people with whom he interacts and the culture of the school. Nicholson and West (1984) contend that the adjustment phase technically is organizational socialization at the work site.

Principals and other managers find that successful accommodation gradually leads to a stability where management tasks become effective and efficient routines. As unfamiliar events that previously were sources of frustration become more routine and family, they cause less stress. Parkay et al. found principals in this stage less intent on proving their leadership by promoting change for its own sake and more interested in the importance of doing a good job for their school.

During adjustment, principals become more familiar with and less concerned about their relationships with their mentors and supervisors (Weiss, 1978), group dynamics (Moreland & Levine, 1983), the characteristics of their jobs (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984), evaluation, and their personal influence (Feldman, 1976). Some scholars even see changes in individual identity and personality, (Mortimer & Lorence, 1979; Brousseau, 1983; Kohn & Schooler, 1983) as a result of these adjustments, but they might be more accurately described in Wanous's terms -- the achievement of role clarity on the part of the new principal. The tasks of the job are assessed. Interpersonal relationships with teachers, peers, and superiors emerge. The principal learns to cope with resistance to change on the part of established members of the group. The differences between the group's

evaluation of the his performance and his own evaluation are confronted. And the principal learns to cope with ambiguity.

**Stabilization – Educational Leadership and Professional Actualization**

This last stage in a successful transition from new principal to school leader is described by Parkay et al. in two steps as educational leadership and professional actualization. Total harmony between principal and school are not the result of educational leadership, but principals take concrete steps toward career and professional growth and advancement for teachers and for themselves and press hard for effective outcomes for the school. When they successfully achieve professional actualization, principals no longer feel compelled to impose their own vision of a school on an unwilling faculty. Faculty and principal are able to transform their established routines toward a more effective instructional system. "Faculty members believe that they have been truly empowered and work collegially and harmoniously to improve the school" (p. 58). The principal, validated through the power of the whole, works to bring out the best in the "incipient vision the faculty has for the school" (p. 18).

As a cautionary note, Parkay et al. (1992) observed only a few principals moving completely through the five stages they identified to actualization in three years. They did, however, find principals moving from coercive behaviors and positional power to personal power and behaviors facilitating learning and growth for themselves and others. They also noted that the first year of a new principal's professional career revealed the "handwriting on the wall" (pp. 61-62) predictive of a principal's eventual development and success. They describe one of these success stories, Hank:

> Although Hank had his share of emergencies and crises during his first year..., he responded to each with a high degree of skill and insight. Throughout the year, he set high expectations...and he empowered others -- students as well as teachers. (Parkay, et al., 1992, p. 69)

Integrated and stabilized school leaders assess and evaluate their decisions and actions by what is best for the school, not by a pre-established vision with which they enter their leadership role and respond more to an internal locus of control than to worries about how they are perceived.

Other writers are less heroic in their terms but no less specific in the social and output outcomes they describe. They evaluate the outcomes of the final stage in the principal's self-image, formation of relationships, adoption of new values, and acquisition of new behaviors--all related to personal, not organizational, outcomes.

During the third stage of socialization, the newcomer locates herself in the context by learning which behaviors are congruent with expected behaviors. Increased commitment to the organization, an altered or reaffirmed self-image and values, and interpersonal relationships develop. Feelings of mutual acceptance should result (Wanous, 1980).

As the school and principal adjust and move toward stabilization, changes in the environment, the school, or individual educators within the school usually mix up the balance, so many writers treat stabilization and preparation for the next changes together, since "it may not be uncommon to find that stabilization never occurs" (Nicholson & West, 1988, p. 14). They caution that scholars too often treat leaders such as principals and the schools in which they work in terms of work outcomes, assessment, management control, job satisfaction, and job design focused on stabilize work structures and relationships, treating people as if they have "no past and no future."

For principals, this stage (a preparation for change) requires that they negotiate two sets of relationships simultaneously -- one with superiors and one with faculty, staff, and students (Duke et al., 1984). And it may involve a continuing informal negotiation among all these people akin to the "social contracting" relationship of leadership (Fulk & Cummings, 1984). The cyclical nature of the stages also requires that people continually project into the future, combining their appraisal and assessment of current work performance with preparation for future transitions.

The social structure or organizational culture at the time a principal takes charge makes up the primary context, the human system into which he seeks integration. Culture is an elusive concept when applied to organizations. While it feels "right" intuitively to many people who work in schools, researchers report that principals have trouble applying it to their decisions and using it to help them do their work better (Parkay & Hall, 1993). This may be because culture is so fundamental to organizations that organizations are cultures (Pondy et al, 1983; Smircich, 1983). To tap the power of the existing culture and use it to his advantage, a principal must come to understand and be able to use the fundamental values, beliefs, and assumptions about goodness and worth that drive and energize the group.

Human systems theory provides another useful framework for a principal seeking to understand a school context. She will be in a formal leadership position, at the "top" of the school level organizational hierarchy. The expectations and responsibilities of that position influence people's responses to her, and she should attend to the inherent features of that structure that affect her interactions with people. Interactions with individuals and groups also will shape the effects of her taking charge experiences and socialization. While many formal and informal interactions can be planned, serendipity plays a part, and the principal needs to be especially attuned to "firsts" that will provide important information.

I pointed out that teachers, parents, and students will react to a new principal/new member of the group in part as a result of the expectations they hold for the role he fills. This "level" response will trigger judgments and reactions. Three central features of human systems strongly affect these responses. They are: similarity of group members; frequency of interaction

or contact among them; and the tendency of people to interact with people like themselves and limit the frequency and intensity of their contact with people who are different (Gecas, 1981).

In the early stages of contact between the principal and the school, the first and second of these features -- the impact of contact on positive feelings and similarity of members -- exert the greatest influence. The similarities among teachers, the community, and the principal and the frequency of contact among them positively affects feelings, increasing liking among the members and creating positive responses. But the nature of these contacts and expectations and beliefs about contact strongly influence these outcomes (another reason the principal should invest time and energy getting to know the context). Communication by itself may not be a balm when problems arise. Monane (1967) points out that unconditional belief in the salutary effects of communication is unfounded. Positive effects depend on the legitimacy of the interaction. Neither increased similarity nor increased contact are "independently or jointly productive of positive affect in systems where hostility is the legitimate expected" outcome of contact (Monane, 1967, p. 28-29). For example, among the Apache, contact between sons-in-law and mothers-in-law is frowned on and produces negative feelings when it occurs. While expectations within schools may be less dramatic, they have the same effects. Firestone and Bader (1992) describe difficulties among superintendents, school boards, and teachers arising from these expectations about principal classroom visits and interactions with teachers about instruction, for example, that exert influence independent of the objective quality of the visits themselves.

These characteristics of social systems raise questions for principals about challenges they will face around diversity. A principal belonging to any underrepresented group faces additional and different challenges from those faced by her more conventional peers. Opportunity and diversity among school leaders are important values, but when perceptions that a principal is "too different" limit contact, block communication, and reduced perceptions that the appointment is legitimate (Pounder, 1988, 1989; Valverde, 1980), the principal faces a serious uphill battle. Surface characteristics present initial barriers that can be overcome but increase the challenge.

Finally, people tend to increase their interactions with people who are like them and limit their interactions with those who are not. This tendency poses problems for principals, their superiors, and their colleagues. First, school and community members' perceptions that a principal doesn't "fit" may lead isolation and the perceived need to protect standard practice and traditions from his influence. Second, the principal might intentionally or unintentionally intensify perceptions of his differences by drawing attention to them by his behavior, because he does not realize how he is perceived. On the other hand, a principal might

highlight similar experiences as an educator, parent, or member of the community, and de-emphasize differences to help others get to know him and the contributions he can make to the school.

Human systems theory also provides insight into process dynamics to which principals can attend. Weick (1976) argued in one of the most cited articles in educational administration theory and research that many of the organizational outcomes observed in schools result from the nature of connections among the different elements of the system (i.e., teachers, students, classrooms, administrators at the school and district level, professional and staff support). He used the phrase "loosely coupled systems" to describe these connections. Loose coupling between teachers and principals makes contact slow to develop. Productive and positive interactions need to occur and spread through the school for good working relationships to develop, and this takes time. "In systems of high organization, the action of one member toward a particular entrant (a person or an idea, for example) is likely to trigger similar action by other members as well" (Monane, 1967, p. 24). In loosely coupled systems like schools, two very different features should dominate early interactions. First, it may take more effort for the principal to establish the legitimacy of her authority and the authenticity of her role (Blau, 1967; Dornbush & Scott, 1975) with teachers, parents, and supervisors and, eventually, with the school as a whole than it would if linkages tighter. Second, and conversely, early, positive (or negative) responses by superiors or influential teachers and parents to the principal and her ideas could trigger similar responses from others over time, especially those with whom she has close and frequent contact. Ogawa (1992) found, for example, that the unhappy and negative interactions between a newly assigned (yet very experienced principal) and a beloved school secretary badly damaged his relationship with teachers and the community.

## Outcomes or Effects

When all the factors in the interactions between the principal and a school come into play, some outcome patterns can be predicted. While a caution is necessary that general patterns do not predict outcomes for each individual experience, observed patterns provide a framework for a principal watching for the effects of his early tenure in the school. A custodial response from the principal would be the most stable outcome. This means that no real change takes place and the inherited past dominates. The custodial label is inherently neither positive nor negative. It means simply that the principal functions as the custodian or guardian of existing values and practices. All aspects of the principal's role remain virtually unchanged, and the principal is much like his predecessor. He essentially replicates his predecessor, learns the requirements of the job, and uses customary strategies and actions to meet these requirements. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) predicted a custodial response when the socialization experiences of a new member of an established group are orderly, take place with strong role models, and result in a new professional identity for the new principal.

Another category of outcomes predicted when a principal takes over is content innovation. When a principal accepts traditional norms and goals while changing tactical alternatives for action, tasks, and the knowledge base on which she draws to get her work done change, the outcome would be content innovation. In other words, the role remains essentially unchanged, but significant change occurs in the content of the actions taken. When new ideas and innovation are stressed during socialization experiences for newcomers and role models are absent, this outcome is more likely.

The most innovative outcome of a principal's socialization experiences is role innovation. When role innovation occurs, missions and goals may be refined or redefined and the role of principal itself may be reshaped. This outcome is more likely when socialization experiences take place randomly and individually, without role models, and affirm a strong professional identity. In other words, when a principal experiences his assignment alone, without formal planning from others and in random order, without dominant role models, and with a strong professional identity in tact, he is more likely to draw on creative and innovative challenges to old ways of doing things. He may reject most of the norms governing conduct and performance and make a genuine attempt to redefine the ends as well as the means (Schein, 1971).

This discussion only briefly introduces the features of early experiences and possible outcomes a newly assigned principal may expect to encounter. For example, I have only touched briefly on the strong personal development effects of custodial responses. Two dimensions of managerial work -- novelty and discretion -- also exert influence over outcomes. The greater the novelty of the role experiences a principal confronts, the greater the likelihood that she will develop new skills and perspectives. The greater the discretion, the more likelihood that she will attempt role innovation. Older, higher status, generalist managers are more likely to say they are role innovators (Nicholson & West, 1988). Since both principal growth and school improvement are desired outcomes when principals take charge, Nicholson and West (1988) report a research finding of great interest:

> [H]igh role innovators are more likely than low innovators to report having experienced personal change as a result of their last job change. This indicates, in the terminology of the theory of work role transitions, that "exploration" is more common as an adjustment mode than pure "determination" (1988, p. 110).

The creative and innovative work that can result when principals receive new assignments deserves as much attention as does the effect of macro level education reform (West, Farr & King, 1986).

In any given situation, each of the possible categories of outcomes discussed could be very productive and appropriate. The need for educators

(new principals and their superiors alike) to invest careful thought and deliberate action to facilitate desired outcomes drives this discussion. Successful principals find their experiences facilitated by friendship and strong affective bonds with their peers, teachers, and superiors (Sherman, Smith, Howard & Mansfield, 1986). Schools and students pay a high price for disaffected and unhappy principals. Wanous (1980) estimated that early socialization outcomes operate as one of the five most important factors creating feelings of alienation and resignations among people in organizational settings. "The meanings of job change are highly personal. An individualized biographical perspective would be needed to fully appreciate how they fit into the lives and careers of managers" (Nicholson & West, 1988, p. 211). This approach has been termed a "worthwhile endeavor" for future research.

> If job change has the power to effect changes in identity as well as in organizational performance then how the transition process is managed has a vital bearing on the well-being and effectiveness of organizations. It would appear that few organizations recognize this (Nicholson & West, 1988, p. 212).

## Implications

A social validation, interactive view of leadership fundamentally reshapes the expectations that principals, their superiors, and the other members of their school organizations hold for leadership. These expectations can be divided into four categories: sources of creativity, inspiration, and vision; the sources and kinds of data principals need to be successful in a particular school; responsibility for shaping outcomes when leadership changes are made; and the nature of mutual respect between leaders and groups in professional organizations.

### Sources of Creativity, Inspiration, and Vision

During the 1980s, much emphasis in principal preparation programs focused on principals' vision or personal and professional platforms (Barnett, 1987; Duke, 1987). This focus provided important insight into aspiring educational leaders, who were exhorted to "know thyself" before they expected others to trust and follow them. This perspective is not meant to denigrate the importance of self-knowledge, creativity, or inspiration on the part of a school leader. It adds the power of others' ideas, perspectives, experiences, and goals to the power of the one leader.

### Sources and Kinds of Data

If the vision perspective can be characterized as "know thyself," a socially imbedded view of leadership adds "know they school" to the imperatives of leadership. Thought and effort directed toward understanding the best and highest professional aspirations of other educators, parents, and students in a school should go into each principal's planning and development. Each new person adds a new dimension, so this

is a continuous process. Data gathering and analysis for the working professional take on new meaning.

## Responsibility for Outcomes

The old practice of handing the keys to the building to a new principal and making sure he knows where the districts policies and procedures manual is stands as a particularly negligent act if viewed from a perspective acknowledging the power of socialization practices to affect leadership outcomes. While principals and other educators must take responsibility for their decisions and actions, principals' superiors should also attend more carefully to the processes attendant to taking charge and their effects on educational outcomes.

## Mutual Respect Between Leaders and Groups in Schools

Finally, this view of leadership encourages greater understanding and respect between assigned leaders and the professionals in schools they are assigned to lead. While I am reminded of Monane's point that communication does not necessarily enhance respect, the kind of understanding and integration this perspective embodies provides expanded opportunities for principals to accrue increased awareness of the resources and resourcefulness that teachers, parents, and students provide for schools success.

## Conclusion

This paper is meant to be a brief overview of a socially imbedded view of leadership that both exonerates principals of demands for heroic leadership and places demands on them for respectful leadership requiring extensive skills tapping the power of context and of other professionals toward the accomplishment of school goals. As schools become increasingly diverse and the professionals in them more expert, varied, and assertive, this perspective offers an alternative to top-down leadership paradigms and specific actions that can be taken to improve principals' leadership in schools.

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